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THE HUMBOLDT CELEBRATION.

ITS MORAL SIGNIFICANCE.—The extensive observance of Baron Humboldt's hundredth birthday must certainly be received as one of the signs of the times, and of times better than they used to be. The anniversary of the birth of Bonaparte, whose impress on the mind of mankind one would have supposed so much deeper than that of a mere observer and expounder of Nature, was noticed only in France, and even there it seems to have excited no spontaneous and universal interest; while that of Humboldt has been honored with grateful affection in both hemispheres of the globe he did so much to explore. It looks as if mankind were really coming to their senses, and learning that it is to their benefactors, and not their destroyers, that their reverence and gratitude is due. Men are beginning, we may hope, to weigh famous men in the scales of reason and common sense, and to assign them their relative places in "the temple where the dead are honored by the nations." The modern Hannibal has been weighed in the balances and found wanting; while the modern Aristotle, whose life had been spent in unfolding the secrets of the world, his famous contemporary had been laying waste, is bid to go up higher and take precedence of his imperial rival! This is a hopeful prognostic of that perfect day of Christian civilization, in the dawning of which it is our happiness to live.

We do not just now remember any instance of merely literary or scientific services to mankind that has received so general and so voluntary a recognition as this of the great German. Shakespeare's hundredth anniversary was kept at Stratford by a jubilee arranged by Garrick, which was rather a glorification of the actor than of the poet, and that of Handel was solemnized by a great musical festival in Westminster Abbey. But these were local, and did not answer to the character of the widespread enthusiasm which has found expression in these Humboldt celebrations. The Burns festivals of ten years since perhaps came nearest to them; but they were of a much more limited range. It is true that most of them in this country have been held where the Teutonic element most abounds, and have been under the auspices of the countrymen of the philosopher; but we believe they have everywhere received the sympathy and the helping of members of all nationalities. The commemoration in Boston will probably be the longest remembered of any of them, owing to the eminence of the great pupil of Humboldt, who recounted in the ears of that vast assembly the worthy deeds of his master. And it distinguishes itself, besides, from most if not all the others by the circumstance that it was set on foot entirely by Americans, and by the further fact that the city government co-operated with it in their official capacity.—*N. Y. Independent.*

FREE MASONRY IN WAR.—"During our rebellion a corps of several thousand troops, on a long and victorious raid, encamped for several days around the residence of one of the most accomplished widow ladies of the State of ——. A squad of men, under the command of an officer, soon entered the residence, and in making the rounds entered the apartment of a lovely widowed daughter, and demanded that her well packed trunk should be opened. Upon raising the lid a mason's apron was seen. The officer demanded to know to whom it belonged, and being answered by the lady that it belonged to her deceased husband, he stepped back, said he could go no further, ordered the trunk to be closed and locked, went out and immediately placed a guard around the house to protect it from further molestation."

If such is Free Masonry, war must be an utter violation of its principles. But if inconsistent with Masonry, how much more with Christianity in its purity, and the fullness of its legitimate influences! If masons will not, or should not war against masons, but should shield one another against its evils, shall Christians, who are confessedly bound by far higher and holier obligations, wage war against each other, and rob, plunder and murder one another without remorse or mercy, and then boast of such deeds as matters of exultation and glory?

PEACE PETITION TO THE POPE.—In anticipation of the Ecumenical Council to be convened next December, at Rome, *The Tablet*, an influential Roman Catholic journal, has published a *Petition to the Pope*, asking his interposition to secure an improvement in the Law of Nations favorable to Peace:

"We cite it," says the London *Herald of Peace*, "merely, as another significant indication of the way in which the Christian conscience and common sense of Europe are revolting more and more against the monstrous system of mutual outlawry and ever-increasing armaments which prevails among the nations of Christendom."

"The undersigned humbly pray for the protection of the Holy See in matters nearly touching their conscience as Catholics, their duty and security as citizens, and the well-being of Christendom. They pray for declarations by the Holy See and the Council on the Law of Nations, especially on the vital points which constitute the difference between legal and illegal wars, and the methods by which armed citizens may be certified that they are not to be called on to exchange their character of defenders of the right against violence and wrong, for that of aggressors and assassins."

They are moved to this petition by no theoretic views, but by anxieties of conscience for their own duties, and apprehensions for themselves and their children; as also by the prospects of the general calamity impending over Europe. They proceed upon unquestionable facts, which show that in recent times Public Law has been set at naught in these its gravest functions; and that in proportion as the nations have been giving themselves up to speculative politics and schemes of indefinite change, the ancient valuable safeguards against injury inflicted by state upon state, and by reckless bloodshed and expenditure of each state, as regards its own subjects, have been cast aside. o o

"They pray further that princes and states may be called on to undertake, with the assistance of their wisest and best, the restoration or creation of such institutions as may tend to maintain justice in this supremest department of human affairs; such institutions and laws as even Pagans have possessed, and such as some who are not Christians do even now possess and venerate; laws and methods of procedure through whose operation the commencement of bloodshedding is not left to one man, or even to many of merely political function, or skilled in merely municipal law; but by which the final issues are made to depend, not on factious contention, but on judicial investigation; so that neither passion nor state craft can lead to violence, and the taking of human life."

"To your petitioners it is a matter of daily pain and sorrow to contribute to the maintenance of armies liable to daily misuse in this fashion, as mere passive instruments; still less can they bear to see their sons entering services in which conscience is liable to the tyrannous enforcement of obedience to lawless and wicked commands. They declare their case to be one of private conscience needing redress, as well as one which involves the security of nations; and finally, they believe it to be one in which the Holy See, the temporal power thereof, and the integrity and honor of religion are deeply interested."

We trust that there is truth in the rumor, "that in the Ecumenical Council to be held in December next, there will be an effort on the part of the Pope, as head of the United Church, to persuade the different nations of Europe to disarm their present enormous and costly armies and fleets, and submit their differences to arbitration."